

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

The importance of verification under article VI is undeniable. Unlike the provisions in the convention concerning destruction, which will apply only to chemical-weapon States, and which will hopefully become obsolete after the 10-year destruction period during which stocks and production facilities would be eliminated, the monitoring regime for activities not prohibited under the convention will be of unlimited duration and of direct interest to a considerably larger number of States. In this context we have addressed the question of clandestine production in facilities which are normally devoted to peaceful purposes but which could be converted to the production of chemicals posing a risk to the objectives of the convention. In developing a regime to address these concerns we must ensure that it is as non-intrusive as possible, while at the same time being as cost-effective as possible. We are not in favour of a system which places unnecessary hindrances on the civilian chemical industry, and in which certain elements of the challenge inspection procedure are sought to be injected. Continued insistence on the inclusion of such concepts are liable to result in the unnecessary politicization of an activity which is intrinsically routine in nature.

The provisions of article IX on challenge inspection will have a central place in the proposed convention, both as a means of providing confidence in its implementation and in order to deter potential violations. To be effective these procedures will have to be expeditious, non-discriminatory and mandatory. Although these principles now seem to be generally accepted, the task of translating them into agreed procedures has not been easy. Numerous proposals have been put forward, but success has eluded us so far. The working paper introduced by four delegations recently is a brave and positive attempt to break the deadlock on this issue, and we have noted that in its effort to accommodate many of the concerns that have been expressed in the Ad hoc Committee by various delegations, it has departed from some concepts which until now had been considered as sacrosanct and non-negotiable.

On this subject of challenge inspection, I would like to state once again some of the ideas which my delegation has expressed in the past, and continues to favour. Critically important among these is the imperative need for including clear conditions which prevent abuse of challenge inspection procedures, and which ensure the legitimate right of States, and particularly smaller States, to protect and safeguard sensitive information and installations which are not relevant to the convention. Additionally, once a challenge inspection is launched, it becomes a subject of concern to the States parties, and can no longer be treated as a bilateral affair between the challenging State and the challenged State: the primary responsibility of carrying out the inspection is that of the technical secretariat. The role of the observer still needs to be clearly defined, taking care not to make him into an "inspector of inspectors". And finally, irrespective of the subjective assessments of the parties concerned, once an inspection is completed, a clear determination on compliance or otherwise should be arrived at by the executive council. Failure to include such a provision in the convention would perpetuate a climate of distrust, and undermine confidence in the verification procedures.